

2 Kings 20-21 – Thursday, June 9th, 2016

2 Kings 20 — 1 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.’” 2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, 3 “Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 “Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.”’” 7 Then Isaiah said, “Take a lump of figs.” So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. 8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What is the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?” 9 Then Isaiah said, “This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?” 10 And Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees.” 11 So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

- Couple of thoughts here as we begin this most interesting chapter the first of which has to do with why God shows him grace.
- The reason God grants him this grace is that He's doing it for the sake of His people Israel, who still face threats from Assyria.
- In other words, God doesn't answer Hezekiah's prayer because he was a good king who merited it, as he prays in verse three.

- Actually, this sort of ties into the second thought, which is that of Hezekiah's prayer being in accordance with the will of God.
- It's thought that Hezekiah was about 39-years old when he learned of this and as such, his prayer is that he still has work to do.
- While this was in accordance with God's will sadly, it would prove to be the very thing that leads to his downfall due to his pride.

- Before we move on I should note that Isaiah 38 provides us with more details of this account, specifically Hezekiah's prayer.

Isaiah 38:9-10 - 9 This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness: 10 I said, “In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol; I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”

12 At that time Berodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13 And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. 14 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?” So Hezekiah said, “They came from a far country, from Babylon.” 15 And he said, “What have they seen in your house?” So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”

- What Hezekiah does here is the very thing that leads to his downfall, this because, it's a textbook case of pride before the fall.
- In effect, he's taking all the credit and glory for what God did and it's evidenced by him saying, “my house, and my treasures.”
- He is so given over to pride that he's unwilling to even share in God's glory, which in and of itself is in just as bad as taking it all.

Of Hezekiah being given over to pride, one commentator said it best this way, “It was not spiritual pride, as with his great-grandfather Uzziah; but worldly pride—‘the pride of life,’ we might say. It was his precious things, his armor, his treasures, his house, his dominion, etc., that he showed the ambassadors from Babylon.”

- I suppose the question becomes one of why Hezekiah fell to the temptation of pride upon receiving this letter from Babylon.
- When he received the threatening letter from the Rabshakeh prior, his response was to immediately seek the Lord in prayer.
- Conspicuously absent with this letter, is any mention of Hezekiah doing that and instead we're told he was attentive to them.

Charles Spurgeon - “Hezekiah, though but a little prince, suddenly found himself a wealthy man, having moreover one thing in his treasury which could not have been discovered among the riches of any other living man, namely, a writ from the Court of Heaven, that he should live fifteen years. ...This great prosperity was a great temptation, far more difficult to endure than Rabshakeh's letter, and all the ills which invasion brought upon the land.”

- Another question that should be asked is that of the motivation on the part of the Babylonians to visit king Hezekiah in Judah.

G. Campbell Morgan - “The real reason of the visit was political; Babylon desired to throw off the yoke of Assyria. What nation was more likely to help them than the one at the hands of which Assyria had been so completely defeated? Babylon sought alliance with Judah against Assyria.”

- I can't help but think about how Hezekiah must have felt when Babylon sought him out in order to form this alliance with Judah.
- Certainly he was flattered, fancying himself as being more important than he was, thinking more highly of himself than he ought.
- Perhaps we need look no further to explain not excuse, his desire to impress and please man as a result of God given success.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most dangerous temptations to become proud it would have to be success.
- So much so the greatest and godliest of men have fallen because of the very success that God had given to them to begin with.
- Such is the case here with Hezekiah, whom God had given health and wealth, prosperity and property to all for His glory alone.

2 Chronicles 32:24–29 (NKJV) — 24 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. 27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. 29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property.

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: 17 ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the LORD. 18 ‘And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ ” 19 So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!” For he said, “Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?” 20 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 21 So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

- This prophecy would be fulfilled some 100 years later, and as a result, Daniel and his fellow Hebrews were taken into slavery.
- Sadly, the chapter ends with yet another bad end of a good king, who would be known throughout history for the tunnel he built.
- For those who went to Israel with us, you walked through what’s known as Hezekiah’s tunnel, which is really quite amazing.

2 Kings 21 — 1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem I will put My name.” 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7 He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.” 9 But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

- There’s something very interesting here that I’d like to point out and it has to do with Manasseh’s age when he became king.
- We’re told that he was twelve years old, which means that three years into the 15-years God gave Hezekiah he has this son.
- The reason I point this out is because; a bad son comes from a good father at the end of his life, when he fell because of pride.

10 And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, 11 “Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), 12 therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. 13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, 15 because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.’ ” 16 Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD. 17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 18 So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

- What’s interesting about what we’re told here in the narrative is there’s no mention of anyone taking a stand for righteousness.
- This would seem to indicate the Israelites were willing participants in the unspeakable evil imposed upon them by Manasseh.
- To me, this would explain why God would mete out such a harsh judgment upon all of Jerusalem, Judah, and even to Samaria.

- When we get to 2 Chronicles 33, we'll learn of Manasseh's repentance, which leads him to try an undo all the evil he had done.

2 Chronicles 33:10–18 (NKJV) — 10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God. 14 After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city. 16 He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel.

19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21 So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. 22 He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. 23 Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24 But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. 25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 26 And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

- What's interesting about the reign of Amon is that he would have a son that would be one of the greatest kings to reign in Israel.

- Sadly, his life was an evil one, and is basically summed up in one verse in 2 Chronicles concerning his sinning more and more.

2 Chronicles 33:23 (NKJV) — 23 And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.